(c) if so, the action that is being taken up with the Sri Lankan authorities to get them released on priority;

(d) whether it is also a fact that they are harassed as if they are terrorists or their supporters, by the Sri Lankan authorities;

(e) if so, in what manner Government is going to take up their cause with the authorities;

(f) whether Government intends to impose severe punishment on the offenders; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) As on December, 2007, there was no bona fide Indian fisherman in Sri Lankan custody. However, there were 13 Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan custody for smuggling narcotics or for transporting Sri Lankan refugees.

(b) to (g) Government have always taken up on a priority basis the question of the safety of our fishermen with Sri Lanka. Whenever Indian fishermen along with their boats have been apprehended by Sri Lankan authorities, Government have intervened and got them released and repatriated to India. Incidents of firing on or apprehension of our fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy have taken place in Sri Lankan waters, close to their shores. While it is important for our fishermen to respect the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL), especially keeping in mind the on-going operations in Sri Lanka, we have impressed on the Sri Lankan Navy to act with restraint and for our fishermen to be treated in a humane manner.

Public resentment in Tibet

†2700. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that consequent upon the recent public resentment in Tibet people in many countries of the world had demonstrated in public support;

(b) if so, whether representatives of the Government of China had resorted to inhuman treatment with the Government representatives of India protesting these public demonstrations; and

(c) if so, the facts thereof and the steps taken by Government of India in protest of such inhuman treatment?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Government are aware of public demonstrations in several countries around the world in response to the recent developments in Lhasa. Government are distressed by reports of the unsettled situation and violence in Lhasa, and by the deaths of innocent people. Government hope that all those involved will work to improve the situation and remove the causes of such trouble in Tibet, which is an autonomous region of China, through dialogue and non-violent means.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.